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men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

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To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual

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possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian

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peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of

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psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, despite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this

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form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

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Vodun dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

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individuals who must meet the demands of two traditions which, in many aspects, are in anything but accord. As regards the Haitian, it must be recognized that the two ancestral elements in his civilization have never been completely merged. As a result, his outwardly smoothly functioning life is full of inner conflict, so that he has to raise his defenses in order to make his adjustment within the historical and cultural combination of differing modes of life that constitute his civilization.

The kind of adjustment that seems to dominate may perhaps best be called *socialized ambivalence*, since, more than any other phrase, it describes this tendency to manifest those rapid shifts in attitude toward people and situations that characterize the responses of the Haitian peasant to such a marked degree that the same man will hold in high regard a person, an institution, an experience, or even an object that has personal significance to him, and simultaneously manifest great disdain and even hatred for it. As outwardly observable, this takes the form of recurring and often rapid changes in behavior toward the object of attention. In attitude, there is vacillation from one emotional tone to another. In its broader implications, as a matter of fact, it is entirely possible that this socialized ambivalence underlies much of the political and economic instability of Haiti, so that, arising from a fundamental clash of custom within the culture, it is responsible for the many shifts in allegiance that continually take place, as it is for the change in attitudes in everyday association.

Since far more detailed studies of individuals must be at hand before the full power of this ambivalent drive can be gauged with any degree of sureness, the problem alone is sketched here. Yet this type of approach cannot but give insight into such occurrences as that of the man whose unwilling possession by the gods of his ancestors was, as described, brought about through the fascination of their forbidden

- 154 rites for him, despite his strict Catholic upbringing. His vacillation between the desire to understand and worship the gods of his ancestors and his utter remorse after he had done this illustrates one way in which conflicts in a cultural setting can affect the outward responses and unsettle the inner adjustment of the individual who is exposed to such a situation. From a broader point of view, such an analysis of Haitian psychology suggests a more realistic understanding of the individuals in other cultures who have likewise fallen heir to conflicting traditions.

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182 However revealing this type of analysis of the springs of Haitian behavior may prove, it will be adding only a fragment of esoteric information unless it, like all other aspects of the investigation of this single society and its mode of life, is pointed toward an understanding of the larger problems of the relation between man and his culture. For just as a study of the effect of the dual character of Haitian behavior upon the personality of the Haitians is important in throwing light on the study of the relationship between culture and personality in general, so the study of Haitian institutions may hold equal significance when questions are raised about the less subjective aspects of human civilization—that is, when attempts are made to understand what may be termed the dynamics of culture.

- 199 Most important in this connection is the demonstration made in this book how cultures in contact influence each other. This would seem self-evident but for the fact that very generally when such a proposition has been stated, it rarely enters into the actual studies of primitive cultures in contact with European civilizations without being neutralized by a counter-assumption that the force of European achievement overwhelms peoples with a differing cultural heritage. As will be seen, the failure to recognize this fact of the reciprocal effects of cultural contacts has entered to a very significant degree into the determination of basic atti-